**Lake County Food Policy Council Meeting Minutes**

**July 20, 2015**

**St. Ann’s Catholic Church Community Room Baldwin, MI**

Minutes by: Kendra Wills, Michigan State University Extension (Grand Rapids)

Meeting Participants:

Lynne Mills, Bread of Life Food Pantry at St. Ann’s

Kendra Gibson, new MSU Extension Nutrition Program Coordinator covering Mason and Lake Counties (cell phone: 231-233-9786)

Dawn Locke

Fr. Ron Schneider, St. Ann’s Catholic Church

Freddie Rosado, Circle R Farm and 4-H Garden Club Leader

Kathy Merchant, Bread of Life Food Pantry Director

Sally Mellema, District 10 Healthy Department

Sue Brown-Havens, Bread of Life Food Pantry

Valarie Handy, USDA Rural Development

Tammy Burrell, Community Health Worker with Family Health Care

Becky Henne, MSU Extension and Voices for Food Grant Coordinator (Eaton County)

Kendra Wills, MSU Extension Community Food Systems Educator covering Lake County but based in Grand Rapids

Becky Henne welcomed the group. Round robin introductions. A correction on the name of the Bread of Life Food Pantry was made to the June meeting minutes.

Freddie reported that he visited the hoop house at Baldwin Schools. He measured the structure at 22’ x 6” x 32’ with a 10’ or 12’ high center pole. He inspected the furnace and believes it in operational. Propane is provided by Fisher gas, which is new the to Baldwin community. Perhaps they can be convinced that donating the propane for this hoop house is a worthy community service project.

There are several tears to the plastic. The plastic needs to be replaced. It also needs a new door. Freddie contacted his hoop house company and they do not have a plastic remnant at this time to donate, but perhaps we can check back with them. Freddie noted he does not like the laminate on the existing broken tables as it does not allow for proper drainage. Perhaps we would need to build or purchase new tables.

Henne explained that this group needs to focus in on a funding request to complete one or two projects in 2015 using the Voices for Food grant funds. At this time several possible projects were brainstormed and discussed.

The following table is a summary of these ideas and the discussion. Please note there are “TO DO” tasks for some people in this proposal.

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| **Project Name** | **Organizations Involved** | **Other Notes** | **Priority Project?** |
| Repair hoop house at Baldwin Schools and have youth grow food for Bread of Life Food Pantry. Give students job/business skills. | * Baldwin Schools * Possibly Family Health Care, which operates afterschool programs * Request assistance from Baldwin Garden Club * Possible funding request to Lake County Community Foundation next spring. | * Explore interest in [www.towergarden.com](http://www.towergarden.com) growing systems for salad greens. * Possible October 2015 intersession to repair hoop house and April 2016 intersession to plant hoop house. Sue Brown-Havens volunteered to contact the school. * Need a quote for hoop house repairs. MSUE will tap our expertise. | Yes |
| Freddie and Bread of Life Pantry will work together to secure produce donations for the pantry and to establish a consumer choice table for the produce. |  | * The Bread of Life pantry needs to develop a method of tracking the donations for the donors and giving them the required paper work so they can get a tax credit for their donation. | Yes |
| Expansion of the Bread of Life Food Pantry to allow more room to implement a client choice shopping model. | * The Pantry Board needs to approve an expansion plan for a grant proposal to USDA Rural Development. Kathy and Sue agreed to work with the Pantry Board on this. * Kendra Gibson is now on staff with MSUE to help with this conversion to the choice pantry model. | * A plan for expansion was developed but had to be put on hold due to lack of funding to move forward. * The pantry serves an average of 45-50 families each week. * Freddie noted that any left over produce could be used by the Senior Center for their meals programs. * Fr. Ron volunteered to request a Senior Center representative attend our next meeting. * Fr. Ron would like to see a garden or a hoop house or the growing towers to be added to the pantry expansion plan. He would like to see pantry users working in this garden to learn skills on how to grow healthy foods and give back to the pantry. | Yes |
| Connect with GEO prison about getting locally grown fresh produce in the prison. |  | * Sue Brown-Havens volunteered to contact the prison to see if we can get a representative to attend our next meeting. |  |
| Work with Baldwin School to source locally grown fruits and vegetables for school meals. |  | * We need a staff member of Baldwin School to join this group. |  |
| Take a trip to Ironworks Café in Manistee. This is a new restaurant to give employment to people with health challenges. This is a workforce development and training project but they are also using local produce. |  | * Henne will see if we can cover the cost of a tour with grant funds. |  |

Henne explained that the goal of the Voices for Food project is to build a grassroots movement in the Baldwin community that supports healthy eating and healthy living habits. We want to see all members of the community speaking the same language and getting excited about eating healthy and other healthy living habits. We will want members of the Lake County Foo Policy Council to be community ambassadors to spread this message and get other people and organizations involved.

The Lake County Food Policy Council will be asked to attend 4 workshops lead by Kendra Gibson on nutrition, cultural competency, and safe food handling. Council members would then have the knowledge to work with pantry clients to help them shop in the choice pantry and to talk with others to build the healthy eating/living campaign.

Members were asked to think about people and organizations they could invite to the next meeting.

The next meeting will be August 24, 2015 at 3:30 p.m. at St. Ann’s Church Community Room. It is open to all.